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Testimony of Stacey Zimmerman SEIU CT State Council

Opposed

H.B. 5260 AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC SERVICE AND OVERTIME PAY

Chairman Tercyak and Gomes distinguished members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Stacey Zimmerman; I am here today representing the Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council the state's largest labor union with over 65,000 members.

SEIU opposes H.B. 5260 AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTIC SERVICE AND OVERTIME PAY as it is currently written. The opposition stems from the fact that this legislation seems to try and negate the federal wage and hour rights won in 2015 as the result of a historic Obama Administration reform revising the "companionship" services exemption from the Fair Labor Standards Act. The industry now faced with having to treat domestic "servants" as domestic workers is looking for a new path to limit the liability they hold when employing domestic help.

The ability for the employer to make as a condition of employment a signed document that effectively limits pay but not responsibility is a slippery slope and in our view a direct attempt by industry to roll back newly acquired rights that have taken over 100 years for domestic workers to achieve.

A live in domestic worker is always on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sleep time is already exempt from wages although it is possible it could be interrupted at any moment. Expanding the ability of the employer to determine that other times of day (meal times, ect) are also exempt would allow employers to further reduce the number of hours for which they must pay their domestic workers, potentially lowering workers' pay significantly while clearly not reducing responsibility.

Connecticut has over the past few years begun to remove the 19th century yok from around the necks of hard working people the majority women of color and this proposal seeks to if not put the yok back on at least saddle these workers with the potential of working hours for nothing.